

## Philosophy Group Report – March 2019

Ian summarised Francis Bacon's ideas. When Bacon wrote *The Great Instauration*, there was little distinction in natural philosophy between alchemy, magic and embryonic science. Bacon saw in science the possibility of understanding the natural world and even becoming master of it. In his major work he identified obstructions in our minds which prevent us carrying out objective thinking. He identified four false idols: of the tribe (built into us as a species): of the cave (our particular preconceived prejudices and agendas): of the market place (problems in human public communication): of the theatre, particularly of traditional philosophical thinking.

Bacon proposed his own view of objective thinking called inductive reasoning where generalisations are formed from comprehensive observations involving a step by step approach. This is basically the introduction of scientific method.

In his publication 'The New Atlantis', he describes a utopian island, where Solomon's House is a research establishment. Various departments are described eg engine houses, sound houses, perfume houses, medicine dispensers curing diseases and many more. This is before science fiction had been written. The research establishment is publicly funded for the good of mankind. He then raises the issue of the link between knowledge and power and how society might control this power.

Many believe that Bacon helped to put science on the map and that he was a talisman for the scientific method. However, this is not a universal view.